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## Croatia

## Organic Products

## Market Brief

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**Report Highlights:**

Croatia has a little over 160 certified organic farmers with organic production on approximately 3,500 hectares. Imported organic products can be found on supermarket shelves and in specialized stores. However, the actual size of this market is unknown. To be able to import organic products, companies must register with the Ministry of Agriculture. Currently, there are 9 registered importers. U.S. farmers with IFOAM certificates are usually able to export to Croatia.

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## Organic Production and Distribution

Croatia has a little over 160 certified organic farmers with organic production on approximately 3,500 ha. The laws and regulations that define organic production were enacted in 2001 and 2002. Officially Croatia just began entered this segment of production. However, some enthusiasts have been utilizing organic methods for many years.

Croatia's conventional agriculture is not very competitive in the world market. Therefore, organic agriculture is attractive to some Croatian farmers as an improved income source, especially if combined with agro tourism, which is recognized and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Grain crops account for the country's largest organic production with about 1,600 ha farmed; followed by pasture land with 904 ha; herb production on 399 ha; and forage crops on 384 ha. Horticultural organic production (including vegetables, orchards and vineyards) is still very limited at approximately 140 ha.

## Policy

By the end of 2002, Croatia reformed its agricultural subsidy program, and in 2003, the government began offering subsidies for organic production. Subsidies for organic production are approximately 30-140% higher than for conventional agricultural production.

Organic products have to be labeled in accordance with the Law on Ecological Production of Agricultural and Food Products (Governmental Gazette NN 12/2001) and the Regulation on Labeling Organic Products (Governmental Gazette NN 13/2002) (See GAIN Report HR 4013).

## Consumption

According to research conducted by the Hendl company and based on a random sample of 401 interviewees from all over Croatia:

- 11.7% of all Croatians have never heard of organic products
- 88.3% interviewees have heard of organic food
- 42.9% of Croatians are able to distinguish organic products in shops
- 35.6% of interviewees do not consume organic food at all, and most of them 44.9% consume organic products only occasionally.
- 19.5% of interviewees regularly consume organic products

Market research indicates that the number of consumers unable to distinguish organic products in food stores is quite high. This holds true even though the number of health food/health conscious consumers is rising, and Croatian companies such as Biovega are experiencing 30% annual growth. Organic products can be bought in supermarkets (in special sections of the store) or in specialized shops.

## Import Regulations

To be able to import organic products, companies must be in a special Registry of the Ministry of Agriculture. Currently, there are 9 registered importers. Imported food and foodstuff must be registered at the Ministry of Agriculture. Only registered products can display an "eco" (organic) label (for additional information, contact our office at the address listed at the end of this report). Foodstuff produced according to IFOAM standards have a good chance to be registered by the Ministry of Agriculture because Croatian legislation is based on IFOAM. U.S. farmers with IFOAM certificates should be able to export to Croatia.

## Trade

There are no import/export statistics for Croatia's organic products because there are no specified HS codes for organic items. Imported organic products can be found on supermarket shelves and in specialized stores. However, actual quantities are unknown. Croatia exports some organic herbs, and organic herb tea mixtures.

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